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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 000116

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: KARZAI DISSATISFIED; WORRIES ABOUT NEWSWEEK; PLANS MORE WAR AGAINST NARCOTICS

Classified By: AMB RONALD E. NUMANN FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

11. (C) Summary: President Karzai is flailing at Newsweek for writing that one of his brothers is a drug dealer. Karzai will make a new push on narcotics eradication. The President criticized our announcing the withdrawal of U.S. forces after NATO comes in. This suggests he has had negative feedback since our initial conversation where he was more relaxed. He once again claimed he was moving on the removal of the governor of Oruzgan. He is concerned about the disarmament of legal groups, feeling that there is talk but no substance. He is right. We will meet again on this next month. End Summary.

12. (C) President Karzai met with the Ambassador Neumann and UK Ambassador Marsden January 9. His main topic of conversation was the recent Newsweek story accusing his brother, Ahmed of being a narcotics trafficker. Karzai asked both U.S. and British intelligence whether they had any evidence to back that up and repeated the question to the ambassadors. We all said that we had numerous rumors and allegations to the effect that his brother is corrupt and a narco-trafficker but that we have never had clear evidence that one could take to court. Karzai fulminated, talked about taking the case to court for libel. Ambassador Neumann made the point that there are two issues; one legal, but the other is political and the President needs to deal with both.

13. (C) Although originally comfortable with our decision to announce a withdrawal of troops in the south after NATO expands, Karzai is now getting less comfortable. He said the announcement was a mistake and should have been held longer. He complained that we do not consult on the tactics in detail before we make announcements. He did not seem too worked up about this and I think this is more a reflection of Karzai's nervousness about whether we'll have the will to fight than a real problem with our withdrawal. His concern came in the context of a newspaper story in radical papers that the governor of Helmand was removed because of UK pressure. This makes the Karzai government look like a puppet of the British -- an old story in Afghanistan -- and has got him rather worked up.

14. (C) Karzai asked Ambassador about his trip to Oruzgan and the bomb near him. Ambassador said that all of our people believed the governor and the police chief should be replaced; they are detrimental to security and our military and State people in the PRT said they would prefer to forego new aid in the province until the governor is gone. Karzai seemed more serious than in our last conversation about removing Governor Jan Mohammed. He said he has decided to appoint him to be the head of security for the Kandahar-Herat Road. Comment: Jan Mohammed likes to fight more than to govern. Security is going to be needed and this may work well.

15. (C) Disarmament of illegal groups: (DIAG) Karzai worried that there is talk but no real policy. Ambassador told him the new director of DIAG, Deputy Minister Nuristani is not sure of his political support. Karzai exclaimed, "how could that be? The minister of defense has full authority to back him," etc. (but did not bother to note that Nuristani has not yet had a meeting with the President who has characterized Nuristani as not good but the best we had). Karzai said that he wanted to come back to work on the DIAG subject with new seriousness. Neumann noted questions among Afghans as to whether the government is serious about DIAG since many in the government are accused of having their own ties to illegal armed groups. Karzai admitted this was a problem but was focused more on questions about whether the U.S. was seriously fighting terrorism because of Pakistan and so turned the question back on us as to seriousness. In any event, he agreed that the DIAG strategy would be a major subject of discussion in the security coordination forum after London. This will give some time for the new head of DIAG and the international community to pull together and set some solid plans in front of the President. Comment: Ambassador recently called on new DIAG head Nuristani and reviewed DIAG with the Minister of Interior (septels). We are consulting with the UK, UN and will be talking to the Japanese who are very involved. A lot of work is necessary but the political will starts with Karzai.

